



What Video Format Should You Use: MOV vs MP4?

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From marketing a business to sharing funny moments, nothing [engages your audience](https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/the-importance-of-video-marketing) (<https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/the-importance-of-video-marketing>) like video. The most used sites on the web are video sharing sites. The most successful

marketing campaigns involve video.

If you create video professionally or video editing is just a hobby, you probably know there are many file formats for video. For video editing on a Mac, two of the most common video formats are MOV and MP4.

There are a lot of questions about MOV vs MP4 in terms of quality of compatibility. In this article, we will answer those questions and provide advice on which format you should use.

MOV vs MP4 – What's the Difference?

MOV is a video format [developed by Apple](https://www.loc.gov/preservation/digital/formats/fdd/fdd000052.shtml) (https://www.loc.gov/preservation/digital/formats/fdd/fdd000052.shtml). It is a type of file container that can hold many different video formats and multimedia. Because Apple created it, it only works with Apple products or video players, like Quicktime.

MOV files often contain high bitrate video files with little to no compression. They are very high quality but have substantial file sizes.

MP4 is also a file container, but it is compatible across multiple platforms. It is an [international standard](https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso-iec:14496:-14:ed-1:v1:en) (https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso-iec:14496:-14:ed-1:v1:en) for transporting encoded video and playback data. MP4 files contain highly compressed video files. The quality is often indistinguishable from uncompressed video, but the file sizes are much smaller.

What Exactly Is a File Container?

A file container is like a folder that holds a lot of different types of data. Both MOV and MP4 are file containers. They can contain a video track, audio tracks, text and captions, and much more multimedia.



File containers are sometimes called wrappers because they wrap around multiple file types. They are essential because multimedia playback requires a single file that holds audio and video together, along with the instructions on how to play the media.

Video wrappers like MOV and MP4 make it possible to share rich media on the web. They also make multimedia portable and easy to edit.

When Should I Use MOV?

MOV files offer very high-quality video playback. If you are editing in a professional environment for film and television, MOV is probably the right choice. MOV supports codecs (compression/decompression) that are preferred by professional editors.

MOV is also handy because it can contain combined multimedia like photos, video, and 360-degree animations. It also includes all the data about the video and audio. That makes it easier to edit the file.

When Should I Use MP4?

MP4 is a standard, so it is more compatible with a wide range of platforms and players. It is the default for web and social media because it produces smaller file sizes with outstanding quality.

If you are working in a Windows or Linux environment or want to share across platforms, MP4 is a wise option.

I Have MOV, but They Need MP4

Because both of these formats are file containers, and not the video file itself, you can convert **mov to mp4** (<https://setapp.com/how-to/convert-mov-to-mp4>). Sometimes a video editor who uses an Apple platform needs to share their work. If the other editor uses a platform that doesn't support MOV, converting the file is a must.

A Note About Quality and File Size

When you convert MOV to MP4, you may notice a significant decrease in file size. The number and types of algorithms available to use with the MP4 file format give you more control. You can specify elements like bit rate (the speed at which the video data is processed), frame rate (the number of frames that appear per second), and compression type.

Making adjustments to these and other controls can have a big impact on file size. This makes MP4 files much more portable and more accessible to share across the web.

Creating smaller file sizes can sometimes result in lower video or audio quality. MOV files usually contain uncompressed video or videos that use lossless compression. However, modern compression technologies can produce very high-quality video playback.



In some cases, you can reduce the size of a video by 50% or more without noticing any difference in the video or audio quality.

What Does YouTube Say?

YouTube is arguably the largest video sharing site in the world. Three hundred hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every hour. YouTube is the authority when it comes to video sharing.

It's a good idea, then, to take a look at YouTube's recommendations for uploading a video.

YouTube prefers MP4 files that include video encoded using the H.264 codec. Audio should be encoded using AAC in stereo. They also recommend uploading progressive (not interlaced) video in a preset number of dimensions/resolutions.

YouTube supports up to 4k video at 3840px x 2160px. YouTube also scales video down to 426px x 240px. Upload your MP4 at the highest possible resolution so that it works on the widest range of playback devices.

The Choice Is Yours

Whether you choose MOV vs MP4 will largely depend on how you plan to share the video. If you are editing in a professional setting and need the highest possible quality, MOV is probably the way to go.

If making sure your video is compatible with the most editing platforms, video sharing sites, and playback devices, MP4 is the right choice.

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